



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
www.ars.usda.gov

"Solving Problems for the Growing World"

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement Number: ARS-X5E-0289
Demo/Alternative Merit
Promotion

Position Title/Series/Grade:
Molecular Computational Biologist
GS-0401-13/14

Promotion Potential: GS-14

Employment Type: Full-time - Permanent

Grade and Salary Range:
GS-13 \$78,012.00 - \$101,413.00 Per Year
GS-14 \$92,186.00 - \$119,844.00 Per Year

Location of Position:
Plum Island Animal Disease Center, Foreign Animal
Disease Research Unit, Orient Point, NY

Who Can Apply (You **must** include a statement in your
application that you are a U.S. citizen to be considered for this
position): All U.S. Citizens

Opening Date: July 25, 2005

Early Cut-Off Date: * September 1, 2005

Closing Date: December 29, 2005

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application
materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional
information regarding employment opportunities, please
visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

Contact Information

Human Resources Specialist:
Roberta Saah
(301) 504-1334

Location Contact Information:
Linda Fenton
(631) 323-3191

DC Relay Service: (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

Send Applications to:
USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Human Resources Division
Attn: Roberta Saah
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5104
Beltsville, MD 20705-5104

Fax: (301) 504-1535
E-mail: scirecruit@ars.usda.gov

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by
the closing date of the announcement. Applications
received in Government envelopes will not be
considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package
Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your
application is complete.

Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting
area.

* Applications received in the Human Resources Division on or before the first cut-off date of September 1,
2005, will receive first consideration. Thereafter, applications received on or before the first of each
subsequent month, will be reviewed and forwarded for consideration if qualified.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

This position requires the selectee to undergo a pre-employment check and a full background
investigation. Any offer made is considered a tentative job offer pending the outcome of the pre-

employment check. Retention in the position is based upon a favorable adjudication of the background investigation. The incumbent will be subject to periodic reinvestigations.

Major Duties:

The subject position is located within the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Foreign Animal Disease Research Unit (FADRU) at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, Long Island New York. The mission of the FADRU is to develop scientific knowledge that will lead to prevention and control measures against foreign animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), classical swine fever (CSF) and vesicular stomatitis (VS) among others. The unit's activities comprise molecular pathogenesis, novel strategies for vaccine and antiviral development, functional genomics, host genetic resistance and epidemiology of foreign animal diseases affecting primarily livestock species (cattle and swine).

Plum Island is seeking a highly skilled molecular computational biologist to serve as a consultant and resource to help improve the design of experiments and drive the analysis of complex data sets in a research program related to the study of genetic factors involved with microbial pathogenesis and host response. In this position, you will actively collaborate with other scientists and serve as a technical resource and advisor in the areas of computational biology, genomics, phylogenetic analyses, computational and analytical methods applied to host and viral genome data sets, such as those generated through microarrays, proteomics analyses and similar methodologies. Specific duties include using computational biology approaches to investigate viral and host genomics and phenotypic data to understand the disease processes; using, refining, and developing constructive methods for sequence analysis that identify conserved, variable and functional domains in viral genomes; conducting phylogenetic analyses of pathogens; and using sophisticated mathematical, statistical, and computational approaches to understanding the genetic basis of animal disease and immune response.

Working Conditions and Other Considerations:

In order to reach the Plum Island facility, the incumbent of this position will be required to travel daily from Orient Point, NY or Old Saybrook, CT, aboard a government-provided marine vessel.

The incumbent of this position may be required to be immunized against diseases being studied at the facility which are transmittable to humans. Selectee will be subject to drug testing prior to entrance on duty. Appointment is contingent upon the successful completion of a pre-employment suitability determination. This may cause a delay in employment.

Qualifications Required: Your education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below.

Basic Requirements

Your application must show possession of a degree in the biological sciences, agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry, or related disciplines appropriate to the position, such as biochemistry, genetics, or molecular biology; OR demonstrate a combination of education and experience--Courses equivalent to a major, as shown previously, plus appropriate experience or additional education.

A Ph.D is highly desirable.

This position has a positive education requirement. You must provide a copy of your academic transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received to verify education when applying for this position. If this information is not provided, your

education may not be appropriately evaluated, and you may lose consideration for this position. If you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your transcripts prior to entering on duty.

Additional Requirements:

Your application must also demonstrate the following experience levels in addition to the education shown previously:

For the GS-13 level, you must have one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-12 level in the federal service.

For the GS-14 level, you must have one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-13 level in the federal service.

Time-In-Grade Restrictions apply for all candidates considered under Merit Promotion/ Alternative Merit Promotion.

Specialized Experience - experience which has equipped you with the following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities - 'KSAs' required to perform the duties of this position:

1. Knowledge of the theory and principles of molecular biology, genetics, and biochemistry.
2. Knowledge of experimental design and analysis.
3. Ability to apply computational science and high performance computing approaches and techniques to genotypic and phenotypic data sets.
4. Skill in the use of computational simulation techniques, statistical methods, and storing, retrieving, and manipulating large genomic data sets. **(Required for the GS-14 only)**

Other Important Information

Benefits Package:

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm.

Veteran's Preference:

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 703-724-1850 or TDD 978-461-8404. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veteran's Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

Relocation Expenses:

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletins 03-402 and 05-412.5, which may be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/412-05.htm#H10>. See also http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm.

Financial Disclosure Requirement:

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. You may be required to submit a financial disclosure report if hired for this position.

False statements:

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

Selective Service System:

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation may be provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

Civil Rights Policy Statement:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).

Application Package Checklist

If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.

- ☐ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

The following information is required of all applicants:

- ☐ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- ☐ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ☐ Social security number
- ☐ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- ☐ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veteran's preference) (Visit the following web site for additional information:
<http://www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>)
- ☐ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veteran's preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- ☐ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
 - ___ Job title
 - ___ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
 - ___ Duties and accomplishments
 - ___ Employer's name and address
 - ___ Supervisor's name and contact information
 - ___ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
 - ___ Number of hours worked per week
 - ___ Salary
 - ___ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- ☐ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
 - ___ Certificates/licenses (current)
 - ___ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
 - ___ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- ☐ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading

“Other Education” for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

- ☐ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- ☐ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- ☐ Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).
- ☐ Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, “Category”.)
- ☐ Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under “Other Important Information” below.)
- ☐ Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- ☐ While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html>).

If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.